United Nations E/2005/88

# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
9 August 2005

Original: English

**Substantive session of 2005**
New York, 29 June-27 July 2005
Agenda item 2
**Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities**

## President's summary of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2005 of the Economic and Social Council, held at United Nations Headquarters from 29 June to 1 July 2005

## Introduction

1. The deliberations on the theme of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2005 of the Economic and Social Council, "Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities", made an important contribution to the process leading up to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly to be held from 14 to 16 September 2005. While expressing their appreciation for the report of the Secretary-General on the theme of the high-level segment (E/2005/56), the Council members noted that the internationally agreed development goals as highlighted in the various United Nations conferences and summits reflected the inherent connections among the social, economic and environmental dimensions of a comprehensive international development agenda. They also underlined the need for promoting an integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes.

2. A session entitled "**Voices against poverty**" was added as a special feature of the 2005 high-level segment. Professor Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Laureate in Economics, 2001; Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO); and Mr. António Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, addressed the Economic and Social Council on issues whose consideration could help move forward the implementation of the international development agenda.

05-45561 (E) 010905

3. **Professor Stiglitz** recommended three changes to international governance that could make a contribution towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The first step would be to honour the promise made to put development at the centre of the Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations. The second proposal was to address global financial instability through global reserve reform. Such reform would need to address the root causes of debt, international macroeconomic imbalances and market failures in the current international financial system. With today's high degree of economic volatility, developing countries had to put aside substantial resources. These could be employed to make headway in the achievement of the Goals if the instabilities were addressed, for instance through the establishment of a "global greenback system". The third suggestion was to compensate developing countries for forests and biodiversity, as was the case in the European Union (EU) system for trade in carbon services, as a way of providing an economic incentive to protect environmental resources while generating innovative sources of development finance.

4. **Mr. Somavia** highlighted the fact that people were in search of "a fair chance at a decent job", which was also highlighted in the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General. He noted that the world had witnessed a 31 per cent increase in global unemployment over the last decade, with young people being the worst affected. Economic growth had not translated into new jobs. He called upon the United Nations and, in particular, the Economic and Social Council to recognize the existence of a "global job crisis" and to make employment a main item in the agenda for the next session of the Council. As a coordinating body, the Council should take the lead in addressing the global job crisis which cut across different issues such as rural development, education and health, which were dealt with by different organizations. By coordinating their efforts in the area of job creation, the Council could make a contribution that would make a tangible difference on the ground.

5. **Mr. Guterres** drew attention to the fact that while much progress had been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, refugees and other displaced people were falling through the cracks. For instance, a recent review of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) had shown that only 10 per cent of PRSPs reflected the needs of refugees, only one third included returnees in the country of origin and less than half mentioned people suffering from internal displacement. He also stressed that while many of the poorest people lived in countries just emerging from conflict, the issue of conflict and development had been given little attention. Finally, he said that each Millennium Development Goal was just as important to actors in the humanitarian arena as it was to development actors.

6. The session on "Voices against poverty" was followed by the High-level policy dialogue on current developments in the world economy and international economic cooperation in the context of achieving the Millennium Development Goals, which allowed for an exchange of views between Economic and Social Council members and the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the World Trade Organization.

7. Speaking of the *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2005*,[1] Mr. José Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, pointed out that the anticipated growth of the world economy for 2004-2006 was not only the strongest for the past few years but unusually widespread among developing countries and economies in transition. Even with a deceleration, developing countries as a group were expected to grow at a rate approaching 6 per cent in 2005-2006, while the growth rate of the economies in transition would remain above 5 per cent. Growth in Africa was expected to be higher in 2005-2006 than in 2004. This higher economic growth in many developing countries was partially attributable to the improvements in economic policies within those countries themselves. In addition, domestic demand was playing a more important role because of those countries' more stable economic and, in some cases, political conditions. However, the outcome was also a result of an international economic environment that, for most developing countries, was more favourable than any since the 1970s. Conditions for many developing countries had also improved in international financial markets. Financial flows to developing countries were increasing, their costs were low by historical standards, and non-debt-creating flows, notably foreign direct investment (FDI), were assuming greater importance. For countries without access to international financial markets, official development assistance (ODA) had reversed its decline and commitments by several donors suggested further increases in the years ahead. Similarly, there had been some further progress towards reducing the debt burden of some of the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPCs). Despite those improvements, however, the net transfer of financial resources from developing countries had continued to increase — from over $270 billion in 2003 to a record of over $350 billion in 2004. While that net transfer overwhelmingly reflected a build-up of foreign-exchange reserves by a number of countries with trade surpluses rather than the capital outflows and debt-service payments that had characterized the 1980s and some of the 1990s, this extensive accumulation of reserves nevertheless raised the question whether the international financial system could be so reformed as to ensure that the countries concerned would not feel the need to use these resources in a way that yielded few tangible developmental benefits beyond "self-insurance" against future financial crises. Mr. Ocampo also cautioned the Economic and Social Council that contrary to expectations, oil prices continued to rise, and could have a critical bearing on the growth of the world economy. Moreover, macroeconomic imbalances, in particular the trade deficit of the United States of America, posed risks to the global economy; and there was a need for more concrete international economic coordination specifically aimed at rectifying such imbalances.

8. **Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi**, Director-General of the World Trade Organization, stated that international trade could be a powerful and effective driver for poverty alleviation and economic well-being. However, its efficacy depended upon a large number of factors. Prime among them was a successful conclusion of the Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations. During 2004, substantial progress had been made in some of the most difficult and controversial areas. Among the advances made, members had agreed to launch negotiations on trade facilitation but not to negotiate on three other new issues that did not carry the support of the full membership. Members also significantly bridged gaps in the agriculture negotiations — including a historic agreement to eliminate export subsidies by a

[1] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.C.2.

date to be agreed. He stressed that only if solid advances were made at the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, to be held in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China in December 2005, could negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda be concluded realistically by 2006. It was encouraging to note, however, that developed countries were not waiting for the Doha round to be completed in order to improve market access opportunities for developing countries. In 2003 almost two thirds of developing-country exports had entered developed-country markets duty-free. Similarly, almost three quarters of exports originating from least developed countries entered developed-country markets duty-free.

9. **Mr. Carlos Fortin**, Acting Secretary-General of UNCTAD, stressed that development strategies aimed at speeding up investment and growth, generating employment and, in the process, reducing inequality and eradicating poverty were crucial. Macroeconomic balance and prudent fiscal and monetary policies were a necessary but not a sufficient condition. African countries had already by and large achieved this. What were needed at present were growth- and investment-oriented policies. Market forces and the private sector must be the privileged agents of the strategies but they must be supported by an active, effective, efficient and honest public sector. Policies were needed to foster industry — not the old-fashioned industrial policies of picking winners but what Professor Stiglitz had called a modern industrial policy, that is to say, a market-friendly but decisive set of policy interventions aimed at addressing market failures in the allocation of resources and steering investment and accumulation in desired directions. However, if national Governments were to assume control of their own development destinies, it followed that they should be able to use a range of policy instruments to devise and put in effect their chosen development strategies. This was a question of policy space. The call for consideration of the issue of policy space should not be equated with the demand for a licence to renege on international economic commitments freely entered into. What was meant was that when the agenda for future economic negotiations was being set, when existing disciplines and commitments were being implemented and when rules were being interpreted, the impact on the policy space of developing countries should be kept in mind.

10. **Mr. Jean-Louis Sarbib**, Senior Vice-President of the World Bank, concurred that the outlook on the global economy looked more promising than it had for some years and that the gains were widespread: the growth rate of all developing regions had been more rapid in 2004 than their average over the last decade. Moreover, financial flows to developing countries during the last year had reached levels not seen since the onset of the financial crises of the late 1990s. FDI totalled $165.5 billion, up by $13.7 billion, in 2004. However, the same countries continued to be magnets for this type of long-term investment. Also, while conditions for achieving better economic performance in sub-Saharan Africa were improving, progress towards the Millennium Development Goals had unfortunately been slower and more uneven across regions than originally thought, with sub-Saharan Africa falling far short. He stressed that business as usual would therefore not do. It would bring incremental improvements in this sector or that project, but would not push us forward with the giant strides needed to enable as many countries as possible to reach that profound milestone of 2015. During the next 10 years, the international community must include scaled-up, proved approaches in health and education, as well as strengthen economic reforms, and improve governance and accountability.

Mr. Sarbib stressed that achieving the Millennium Development Goals would depend above all on developing countries' ability to achieve stronger public sector performance in delivering services. The challenge was essentially political. Evidence showed that aid worked best where policies and governance were good. While some donors suggested that a viable strategy in weak States would be to bypass the public sector altogether, Mr. Sarbib pointed out that no country member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had ever achieved universal health or basic education coverage with mainly private systems — in fact, most were heavily public.

11. **Mr. Reinhard Munzberg**, Special Representative of the International Monetary Fund to the United Nations, stated that the International Monetary and Financial Committee had noted at its last meeting that widening imbalances across regions and the continued rise in oil prices and oil market volatility had increased risks. He pointed out that there were substantial gaps in growth performance between the regions of the world. The United States current-account deficit had increased significantly in recent years while emerging Asian economies continued to run large surpluses. Addressing global imbalances and restoring and sustaining balanced growth to the world economy require vigorous collaborative efforts. Also, effective poverty reduction needed high and sustainable growth. Developing countries needed to intensify their reform efforts, including through further development of their own poverty reduction strategies. This also required well-targeted structural reforms to boost competitiveness and productive investment. Poor countries needed to find ways to harness the benefits of FDI and private sector activity. They could lay the foundation by strengthening institutions and governance and by establishing predictable legal and regulatory frameworks. Developed countries, on their part, needed to scale up their aid to low-income countries, as pledged in the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development.[2]

12. Finally, at the High-level policy dialogue of the 2005 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, participants were unanimous in expressing their support for the comprehensive United Nations development agenda. However, while doing so, most pointed out that the challenge at present was not a lack of strategies and objectives in implementing the agenda, but rather a scarcity in the means of implementation and the political will to fulfil the commitments made over the past decade or more. Participants recognized that while there had been positive strides in improving the lives of millions across the globe, progress was slow and uneven and, in some instances, the accomplishments of the past in the development arena had eroded. Globalization had favoured a few nations and left many behind. As a result, there was a renewed and strong call for multilateral cooperation by most delegations.

# I. Implementing an international development agenda

13. In the current substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, delegations recognized the unique opportunity presented to the international

[2] *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

community in 2005 to build momentum in the implementation of the development agenda. A large number of speakers participated in the general debate and other events during the high-level segment. The essence of their participation is captured below.

14. It was generally recognized that **development was primarily the responsibility of developing countries** themselves. As noted above, developing countries needed to intensify their reform efforts, including through further development of their own poverty reduction strategies and well-targeted structural reforms designed to boost competitiveness and productive investment. Speakers also stressed the importance of South-South cooperation as well as triangular cooperation and regional initiatives in the achievement of the development goals. Speakers urged Governments to adopt sound macroeconomic, structural and sectoral policies and lay the foundation for harnessing the benefits of FDI and private sector activity by strengthening institutions and governance and by establishing predictable legal and regulatory frameworks. Delegations stressed that along with **good governance**, there was a need for respect for **human rights, the rule of law and strong democratic processes** based on social justice. Without these, development could not be broad-based and all-encompassing.

15. Participants agreed that the **eradication of poverty and hunger** continued to remain an elusive goal for many countries and thus required a twin-track approach: programmes and policies to support the productive sectors, especially agriculture and rural development, combined with programmes to enhance immediate and direct access to food for the most needy. National Governments in developing countries retained primary responsibility for reducing hunger and poverty in their countries, assisted by international donors, organizations of the civil society and other stakeholders. This implied that harmonization between donors and recipients and coordination among donors were crucial to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of resources mobilized for hunger and poverty reduction. Speakers stressed that developing countries, especially those in Africa, needed assistance in the forms of ODA, debt relief and domestic resources as well as technical assistance and capacity-building in order to create or strengthen institutions and policies capable of responding to their citizens' needs and to attract private investment, which was a prerequisite for sustainable growth. The creation of a fair and conducive international trade environment, especially for agriculture, was essential for national growth and poverty reduction. The critical need for employment-generation to ensure the success of poverty reduction strategies was underlined. To that end, the cross-border movement of people and its links to poverty reduction also demanded attention.

16. It was emphasized that reducing poverty and hunger was a precondition for achieving the majority of the remaining Millennium Development Goals, but that on the current trajectory, the hunger reduction goal could be met no earlier than 2050, well beyond the 2015 deadline. Speakers underscored the fact that hunger had a devastating impact on the lives and livelihoods of the people suffering from it: it reduced productivity and working capacity, making people susceptible to disease and preventing children from learning. It thus compromised the growth of entire economies. Alleviating hunger was a precondition for poverty reduction.

17. In the area of human rights, empowerment of women through protection of their basic human rights was a key concern for many Member States. Women's

rights, prevention of violence against women and promoting **gender equality** were of vital importance in promoting human rights and development. Member States felt that the empowerment of women was essential to achieving the development goals and urged that a gender perspective be fully mainstreamed in all development policies and programmes and into strategies to achieve the development goals at the national and international levels, including the work of the United Nations. To that end, gender equality and women's empowerment were considered important not only as goals in themselves, but also as a means to achieving other goals. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the Beijing Platform for Action[3] and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century",[4] provided a solid framework for the work towards gender equality and the empowerment of women. Together with the United Nations Millennium Declaration[5] and the Millennium Development Goals, they constituted the basis for addressing the challenges of gender inequality, including in the allocation of resources and improving accountability.

18. While the work to achieve **universal primary education** should continue, a greater emphasis should be placed on the provision of **secondary education**. To ensure inclusion and access especially for females, there was a need to reduce the cost of secondary education so as to make it more affordable through the provision of scholarships/bursaries specifically targeting girls in rural communities and marginalized or vulnerable groups. Speakers pointed to the ample research evidence on the high correlation between level of education of women beyond primary schooling and women's empowerment, lower fertility, reduced vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and violence, and increased participation in the formal as opposed to the informal sector of the job market. The participants emphasized the need for situating schools closer to homes, ensuring flexibility in the school calendar and hours of schooling, improving the relevance and quality of education, encouraging the participation of girls in science and technology, and making schools more girl-friendly.

19. Delegations also stressed the importance of addressing the **social dimensions of development**. They pointed out that globalization could be made fair and equitable only through addressing its social aspects. In particular, investing in people through, inter alia, creating decent job opportunities and enhancing education systems, was crucial for poverty eradication and sustainable development. Literacy competencies and skills for youth and adults, especially mothers, would reduce the high incidence of illiteracy and break the vicious circle of intergenerational illiteracy. Literate parents, especially mothers, could ensure both the early stimulation of learning in the early years of their children, and the enrolment of children in primary schools and the completion of their education at least at the primary level. In addition, improving the literacy skills and competencies of both youth and adults had a strong correlation with job opportunities and job creation. All of these had a positive impact on socio-economic development and human

[3] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[4] General Assembly resolution S-23/3, annex.

[5] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

security. To that end, participants urged the speedy implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995.[6]

20. The lack of adequate **health systems** was an area of universal concern. Stronger equitable national health systems were considered central to the challenge of scaling up services and proved effective health interventions that provided adequate numbers of trained and motivated health workers, the provision of basic drugs, strengthened infrastructure, the elimination of user fees and the ability to monitor and respond to infectious disease outbreaks. In too many countries the health systems needed to address the many challenges were non-existent or on the point of collapse. Building and strengthening national health system capacities had to be at the centre of national and international efforts. The **lack of adequately trained health workers** in most developing countries, including through migration to developed countries and loss to HIV/AIDS, was recognized as a major obstacle to progress, including in the **fight against HIV/AIDS, as well as other communicable diseases**, and was a source of grave concern. Participants expressed a sense of urgency with respect to addressing the issue both internationally and in the affected countries themselves. For Africa alone, it was estimated that 1 million additional health workers were needed.

21. Stressing the importance of the fight against **HIV/AIDS**, Member States endorsed an integrated approach that would include **prevention, treatment, care, support and research**. In this context, particular attention had to be given to young people and women. The necessary resources should be provided in this fight, in particular through a full funding of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Participants also supported an integrated approach for the fight against **HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis** and stressed the need to increase the capacities of the partner countries, to increase the resources available and to support access to treatment, research and the development of new prevention instruments.

22. Reproductive health services were considered an integral part of functioning health systems. Speakers stressed that those services must be strengthened in the interest of millions, in particular women and children. Currently, there existed deep inequities in access to reproductive health services between and within countries. Universal access to reproductive health services, including family planning, was essential for making progress on Millennium Development Goal 5 (Improve maternal health) and required sustainable and predictable financing. It was emphasized that without greater attention and resources directed towards sexual and reproductive health and women's empowerment and gender equality, the health-related Millennium Development Goals would not be achieved. In that context, participants stressed the importance of full access to reproductive health services by 2015 for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Improving nutrition, especially of children and infants, was one of the key factors — though an often overlooked one — for increasing the likelihood of children's surviving and thriving. Moreover, achieving goals for poverty eradication, water, sanitation, hygiene, environment and education would also improve health status and expedite development.

23. At the same time, **environmental issues** and **sustainable development** needed to be integrated even more closely into national and international poverty reduction

[6] *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

strategies. It was important to remember that the major steps in eradicating poverty still encompassed access to clean water, nutritionally adequate food, decent homes and decent work. With national priorities and strategies defined, there remained the challenge of building sufficient capacity at the national level and access to the necessary resources for effective implementation. To that end, Member States emphasized that the full and speedy implementation of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation")[7] was crucial. Climate change, desertification and the erosion of biodiversity also had social consequences. They also called for developing new technologies for increasing the supply of renewable energy. Participants also underscored that it was important to address the issue of slums through efforts not only to upgrade existing settlements, but also to counter the growth of new slums. Speakers pointed out that the levels of urbanization were such that the Millennium Development Goals agreed to in 2000 would impact on only a small proportion of slum-dwellers. It was stated that the current **environmental governance structure** was too decentralized and not sufficiently effective. There was a widely shared view that this issue should be addressed.

24. While stressing that development was primarily the responsibilities of developing countries themselves, participants recognized that **ODA, FDI, debt relief and trade** were crucial for generating resources for pursuing development. In that regard, the full implementation of the Monterrey Consensus was crucial. Developing countries should strengthen efforts to fulfil their part of the Monterrey commitments by creating an enabling environment with good governance and through optimal domestic resource mobilization. In that regard, the importance of private sector development, including a strong financial sector, was stressed. Developed countries, on their part, must fulfil their commitments relating to ODA, debt and trade. To that end, Member States welcomed the announcement of timelines set by certain countries by which they would attain the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) for ODA. They also urged developed countries that had not yet done so to make concrete efforts to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of GNI as ODA to developing countries. Some delegations pointed out that ODA should be delivered in conformity with the recipient countries' priorities and specificities without stringent conditions or complex disbursement procedures. Speakers also noted that debt relief was often counted as ODA, as was humanitarian assistance. Although these forms of assistance were of great importance they did not necessarily contribute to the long-term sustainable achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Countries pointed out that while efforts were being made to improve the quantity of aid, it was necessary to focus on the quality and effectiveness of aid flow. Aid effectiveness could be increased through budgetary support and sector-specific support as identified by recipient countries. To that end, delegations welcomed the progress made at the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), a second High-level Forum on Joint Progress towards Enhanced Aid Effectiveness, held in Paris from 28 February to 2 March 2005, and committed to the timely implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, including the agreement by September 2005 of monitorable targets for 2010. Furthermore, delegations underscored that while the issue of absorptive capacity

[7] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

should be addressed, it should not be used by donor countries as a reason to reduce aid — particularly vital investment in physical infrastructure and power facilities. At the same time, Member States called for predictable and less volatile aid mechanisms.

25. Participants deliberated on ways to maximize the attractiveness of developing countries for **FDI** and to ensure that FDI was useful for development. FDI was seen as having the potential of building infrastructure and providing basic services for development. It was emphasized that good governance and the rule of law securing predictability and transparency were essential for the accrual of foreign capital. The creation of policies and institutions that favoured market-led growth would be particularly useful. However, speakers also underscored that domestic investment and the halting of capital flight were just as important. It was pointed out that while international aid was important, without economic and social freedom, the rule of law and honest government, it had little value. To that end, developing countries should create an enabling environment for the private sector with a sound macroeconomic framework, clear definitions of property rights, enforceable contracts, competitive markets and well-designed regulatory policies. This would enable developing nations to unlock approximately $9.4 trillion in potentially usable assets.

26. Many speakers called for a timely and successful conclusion to the negotiation of the Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations so that **trade** might fuel growth to help meet the Millennium Development Goals. Moreover, they called for efforts to ensure that its outcome helped achieve a multilateral trading system that would be truly responsive to development concerns. The importance of a universal, rule-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system was repeatedly underscored. It was emphasized that efforts should be made to complete expeditiously the Doha round so as to fully realize its development dimension. In this regard, speakers recalled the decision on the Doha agenda work programme adopted by the General Council of the World Trade Organization on 1 August 2004 and called for balanced and parallel progress within and between areas under negotiation, bearing in mind the needs and concerns of developing countries, particularly in the areas of special and differential treatment, agriculture, market access for non-agricultural products and capacity-building.

27. Speakers welcomed the decision of the Group of Eight (G-8) Finance Ministers in June 2005 to cancel the multilateral **debt** of 18 heavily indebted poor countries, but stated that additional measures were needed for non-HIPC countries. Some delegations noted that it was counterproductive for the cost of debt-servicing to outstrip the value of ODA and called for a comprehensive solution to developing countries' debt crisis. Some participants called for efforts that would ensure that all developing countries' debt was sustainable, and would not undermine national efforts to achieve internationally agreed development goals. Furthermore, they emphasized the need to broaden the reach of the debt-relief programme of the G-8 countries beyond 18 heavily indebted poor countries. It was also stressed that debt relief could play a key role in liberating resources that should be directed towards activities consistent with poverty eradication, sustained economic growth and sustainable development and the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. In this regard, while acknowledging the recent support for 100 per cent debt cancellation of outstanding obligations of heavily indebted poor countries to

the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the African Development Bank, speakers called for further measures to provide comprehensive and durable debt relief to all developing countries, including resolving the debt problems of least developed countries, and low- and middle-income developing countries that were not eligible under the HIPC Initiative. They urged countries to direct those resources freed through debt relief, in particular through debt cancellation and reduction, towards the achievement of these goals and called upon them to continue to improve their domestic policies and economic management, including stable macroeconomic frameworks and transparency and accountability systems of public finance.

28. Many representatives welcomed efforts to develop innovative ideas for mobilizing resources for development and stated that progress should be complemented with simplified procedures for rapid access to resources so as to maximize impact. The launching of an International Finance Facility (IFF) and the decision to implement international solidarity levies received widespread support. Countries stressed the need to explore further **innovative sources of financing** for development to generate additional resources.

29. Participants called for **science and technology** to be promoted so that sustainable development could be pursued, including by building developing countries' capacity for science and technology and increasing international assistance in the critical research areas of agriculture, health and environmental management. They noted that the potential of information and communication technologies (ICT) had not been fully tapped and that scientific research and technology transfer were crucial for poor countries' improvement of their health care, schools, infrastructures and governance. It was observed that multi-stakeholder alliances and partnerships should be promoted in further exploiting the potential of ICT.

30. Most delegations were of the view that the Millennium Development Goals could not be met without taking into consideration the **needs of countries in special situations** such as least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, and countries in Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa. While the provision of duty- and quota-free access was essential for the least developed countries, strategies aimed at enhancing their competitiveness and the diversification of their exports were also required. At the same time, the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010,[8] the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries,[9] and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States[10] should be

[8] A/CONF.191/13, chap. I.

[9] *Report of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 28 and 29 August 2003* (A/CONF/202/3), annex II.

[10] *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

implemented effectively. Highlighting the special needs of least developed countries, speakers called for the international community to deliver from 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of GNI for ODA. Most delegations noted that urgent action was needed to prevent sub-Saharan Africa from failing to meet all the 2015 goals. They stated that African countries must assume ownership and leadership in implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, and improve macroeconomic management, governance and accountability. To that end, they expressed their unwavering support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/57/304, annex). They also called for a substantial increase in the volume and quality of external aid to sub-Saharan Africa and affirmed the need to expand capacity to absorb aid by removing bottlenecks in the productive sectors and improving human capital. The monitoring process in sub-Saharan Africa should be strengthened by improving the statistical capacity of these countries and by enhancing analytical capabilities of the monitoring framework.

31. Speakers highlighted **the role of NGOs and partnerships with civil society** in achieving the goals of the comprehensive United Nations development agenda. Such organizations could play a crucial role at the local national and international levels to ensure that the lives of millions across the globe were improved. Participants expressed the hope that national Governments would strive to nurture such partnerships and networks and that civil society would be included at the time of both policy formulation and implementation

## II. The role of the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations system

32. Delegations expressed strong support for a central role for the Economic and Social Council in the follow-up to and the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and related fields and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It should provide policy guidance to the United Nations system on these issues and should provide an institutional platform for their integrated analysis and mainstreaming. Some representatives also underlined the need for further strengthening the role of the Council and its functional commissions and related subsidiary bodies in pursuing the United Nations development agenda and encouraged the functional commissions to further promote synergies in their work. The Council should continue to support the coordination and harmonization among operational organizations as well as among humanitarian bodies. Its role in operational coordination and providing guidance for the United Nations funds and programmes, and in promoting dialogue and partnership, should be strengthened, and its agenda and work programme streamlined.

33. In this respect, delegations stressed the importance of pursuing vigorously the reform of United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies and ensuring system-wide coherence. Delegations supported the Secretary-General's urgent appeal for a more integrated international environmental governance structure, based on existing institutions. With regard to development, some Member States felt that the Economic and Social Council could evolve to a high-level development cooperation forum, where global, regional and national strategies and policies for development cooperation could be reviewed. Furthermore the Council

needed to respond to emerging policy challenges and build coherence with other organizations.

34. At the country level, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and its Results Matrix should be used as effective tools with which to assist Governments in translating the goals of the United Nations conferences and summits, and the Millennium Development Goals, into national policies, strategies and programmes and to monitor implementation. The need for strong, concrete support for the system-wide role of the Resident Coordinator in promoting the realization of the development goals in their totality was also emphasized, as was the need to ensure that the United Nations, at the country level, operated in a team with a common programme in support of countries' poverty reduction strategies. Enhanced cooperation with international financial institutions was also important.

35. Speakers also felt the need to strengthen the Economic and Social Council's role in the field of post-conflict situations, in particular by ensuring coherence with long-term development objectives. To that end, they stressed that the Council should be more proactive in post-conflict management and collaborating more closely with the proposed Peacebuilding Commission (see A/59/2005/Add.2).

## III. Conclusion

36. Countries acknowledged the interrelation among development, security and human rights. They emphasized increasingly the role of the Economic and Social Council and its responsibility in building the future. The Council must measure up to its role and assume its responsibility. The ongoing process was an opportunity that must not be missed and the momentum should continue not only up to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly to be held in September 2005 but beyond so as to enable countries to achieve their development objectives. To that end, countries agreed that the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits, would be achieved only if all partners worked together in a spirit of shared responsibilities and partnership. What was essential was political will and commitment.

37. The 2005 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council also included eight round tables organized around the Millennium Development Goals. The themes included: eradication of poverty and hunger; health; global partnerships and financing of the Millennium Development Goals; building State capacity to meeting the Millennium Development Goals: human rights, governance, institutions and human resources; education and literacy; gender equality and the empowerment of women; environmental sustainability; and national strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Detailed summaries of the round tables are available in document E/2005/CRP.6 and Add.1. Twelve ministerial breakfasts were also organized. The topics discussed at the breakfasts included: science, technology and innovation to meet the Millennium Development Goals, including ICTs; land and conflict; microfinance: building inclusive financial sectors to achieve the Millennium Development Goals; impact of commodities on poverty reduction and sustainable development in the least developed countries and other vulnerable economies; human resources and the Millennium Development Goals; working out of poverty; role of volunteerism in achieving the Millennium Development Goals;

forging powerful partnerships; migration and the Millennium Development Goals; synergies between the Brussels Programme of Action and the New Partnership for Africa's Development in achieving the Millennium Development Goals; the Millennium Development Goals as a tool for comprehensive local development in Albania; and centrality of gender in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.